

ABRIDGED NOTES

BY REV. W. S. PLUMER BRYAN

TO HIS BOOK

"AN INQUIRY INTO OUR NEED OF THE GRACE OF GOD"

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Five other "Notes" may be made available. They are entitled:

Pelagius and His Theory of Human Nature.

John Austin on the Fundamental Conception of Law.

Seneca and Omar Khayyam.

Naturalistic Religion In Its Full Development.

Being, Becoming and Personality.

Those who are interested should inform the present editor,

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NOTE I.—DIFFERENT KINDS OF LAWS

Dr. Charles Hodge¹ describes the different kinds of laws:

1. Laws founded on the nature of God—Love, Justice, Mercy.
2. Laws founded on the permanent relations of men in the present state of existence—property, marriage, parental and filial, superiors and inferiors.

These are founded on the constitution which God has seen fit to ordain.

3. Laws founded on temporary relations of men or conditions of society—judicial and civil laws of theocracy, distribution of property, punishment of crimes. Such bind only those who are in the circumstances contemplated.

4. Positive Laws—coming from the explicit command of God. E. G. external rites and ceremonies: positive, that the seventh rather than any other day of the week be set apart; moral, that this is a day of rest from worldly avocations.

NOTE II—"THE LAW OF NATURE" IN HISTORY

The Law of Nature is a phrase that illustrates the radical changes which take place in the use of words. Until comparatively recent time, it had no reference to what is now known as Natural Law and which is sometimes called the Law of Nature, meaning generally the world, the universe, the cosmos. It denoted rather the microcosm, the world within. Thomas Aquinas² (d. 1274) in his early day, defines it:

A rule of law is nothing else than a dictate of practical reason in the ruler who governs a perfect society. But supposing that the world is ruled by divine Providence, it is manifest that the whole society of the universe is governed by divine reason. Hence the plan of governing things as it exists in God, the rule of the universe, has the character of law . . . This manner of law must be called eternal . . . Since all things subject to divine Providence are ruled and measured by the eternal law, it is manifest that they all participate in the eternal law to some extent. But . . . the rational creature is subject to divine Providence in a more excellent way, being itself a partaker in Providence. Hence it has a participation in the eternal law . . . Such participation in the eternal law on the part of a rational creature is called natural law.

From the viewpoint of Jurisprudence, Dean Pound,³ quoting Aquinas, sets forth the relation of Law and Morals and nowhere recognizes what has come to be called Natural Law. The Law of Nature, as he views it, is simply that law which reason and conscience prescribed for all men and which reached its fullest development in higher civilization. And it was what Blackstone meant as "dictated by God Himself". It was what Burlamqui, Wolff and

¹ Systematic Theology, III. 267.

² Summa Theologiae, I-II Question 91 Page 9, Art. 1-2.

³ The McNair Lectures, 1923, University of North Carolina: Law and Morals, 1. 93. 97.

Pothier had in mind. Jurisprudence with its weight of authority merely ignores the effort to appropriate the terms it has employed for centuries past to other uses.

As late as 1909, Prof. A. Lang¹ used the term without a hint of its application to Physical Law. He recognized it in Grotius, as affording "one of the principal historical factors in the formation of the modern spirit:" he held that Rousseau's *Contrat Social* is "the last great manifest of Natural Law", and that the Calvinists were leaders in the Monarchomachist movement which "brought man's powers into the liveliest activity and undertook the most diversified tasks with vigorous confidence and so, with impatient energy, carried humanity forward on its way."

NOTE III—THE VARIOUS SENSES OF THE WORD "LAW"

Care must be taken to distinguish the use of 'law' in this connection from that which is common in modern Biblical criticism. There it denotes not law nor even the Moral Law, but the customs and codes of ancient peoples and specifically the law of Israel.

Prof. C. F. Kent² notes that ancient peoples, almost without exception, regarded these laws as of divine origin. The code of Hammurabi, the Egyptian, Greek. (Demosthenes) and Latin (Cicero) and English (Blackstone) ideas are put alongside the Biblical teaching which is traced to "late traditions". He interprets Israel's legal history as illustrating five stages in the growth of law. The first is the period of relative lawlessness, when human relations are determined only by custom; in the second, questions of dispute are referred to tribal chieftains for decision; in the third is the development of a definite oral form of decalogues etc.; in the fourth, primitive oral laws are committed to writing; and in the fifth these are modified, expanded, codified and enlarged upon to meet the needs of a developing civilization.

It is for our Biblical theologians to pass upon this use of the word 'law' and these periods of its development. The usage, however, is to be distinguished from the fundamental conception of Moral Law, as an expression of the character of God, and, as such, ethical, universal and invariable, in itself.

The extent to which this law has been known among men and is known today, the comparison between the moral standards of Christian and non-Christian nations and the degree to which those standards are of practical force are all related questions, which do not affect this fundamental conception.

¹ The Reformation and Natural Law, translated by Prof. J. G. Machen, P. T. R., VII. 2. 179 ff

² Israel's Laws and Legal Precedents Encyc. R. & E. VII. 824.

NOTE IV—RECENT JUDICIAL DECISIONS AS TO LIBERTY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Philosophy and Religion alike in their discussions of liberty and responsibility will gain greatly if they will give heed to the decisions which come from the higher courts of law in the determination of liberty and responsibility. It has appeared in the text that the Moral Law is one and that human courts of law proceed on fundamental principles which are imbedded in it but only as far as their jurisdiction may extend. In view of the long history of jurisprudence and the application of its principles to the questions of our day, some of these decisions are illuminating.

In the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division, District Judge James H. Wilkerson, in the case of the United States of America, complainant vs. Railway Employees' Department of the American Federation of Labor, in Equity 2943, in delivering his opinion, comments on the argument of the defendant, that to prohibit some of the acts against which the complainant seeks an injunction, is to deprive them of fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution. "This contention has been answered by what has been said with reference to the unlawful purpose of the conspiracy". He then cites the opinion of the Supreme Court of the United States¹:

The cardinal error of defendants' position lies in the assumption that the right is so absolute that it may be exercised under any circumstances and without any qualifications; whereas in truth, like other rights that exist in civilized society, it must always be exercised with reasonable regard for the conflicting rights of others.

In another case, the Supreme Court² said:

No conduct has such an absolute privilege as to justify all possible schemes of which it may be a part. The most innocent and constitutionally protected of acts or omissions may be made a step in a criminal plot and, if it is a step in a plot, neither its innocence nor the constitution is sufficient to prevent the punishment of the plot by law.

Judge Wilkerson proceeds:

The record in this case shows that the so-called peaceable and lawful acts are so interwoven with the whole plan of intimidation and obstruction that to go through the formality of enjoining the commission of assault and other acts of violence and leave the defendants free to pursue the open and ostensibly peaceful part of their program would be an idle ceremony.

This is supported by the language of Circuit Judge Wood³:

The rule is familiar in criminal jurisprudence that any act, however innocent in itself, becomes wrongful or criminal when done in furtherance of an unlawful design. But whether or not, in a particular case, an injunction will be appropriate, and to what extent it shall go if granted, will depend on other

¹ Hitchman Coal & Coke Company vs. Mitchell 245 U. S. 229. 253.

² Alkens vs. Wisconsin 195 I. S. 194. 206.

³ United States vs. Debs. 64 Fed. Rep. 724-763.

considerations than the mere wrongfulness or illegality of the act or conduct proposed to be enjoined. The right of men to strike peaceably, and the right to advise a peaceful strike, which the law does not presume to be impossible, is not questioned. But if men enter into a conspiracy to do an unlawful thing, and, in order to accomplish their purpose, advise workmen to go upon a strike, knowing that violence and wrong will be the probable outcome, neither in law nor in morals can they escape responsibility.

The opinion of Judge Wilkerson concludes:

It follows, therefore, that the motion to dismiss the bill must be denied. It follows, also, that the complainant is entitled to an injunction prohibiting the parties to this combination from committing the unlawful acts charged, the effect of which is to obstruct interstate transportation and the carriage of the mails.

NOTE V.—RITSCHL'S THEORY OF MORAL LAW AND HIS CONCLUSIONS

No discussion of this question is complete without full recognition of the place and influence of Dr. Albrecht Ritschl¹ of Gottingen, who has impressed his thought upon so many religious thinkers in the present day. The treatment which he gives to the Moral Law in his chapters on the Doctrine of God (B IV) and the Doctrine of Sin (B V) is fortunately so full, and his conclusions are set forth so clearly, that this note will perhaps indicate his position sufficiently for not only this question but also for those which are to follow.

Ritschl distinguishes law from morality in that the one covers only those conjoint or mutual actions which render possible the existence of the State, while morality embraces the inward tenor of the will as such and all actions which the standard of law leaves undetermined. That is, in his view, law is Civil Law and Morality is Moral Law, and these narrow limitations of our common terms ought to be carefully noted. Moral law, he says, is that system which embraces those dispositions, intentions, and actions which necessarily follow from the all comprehensive end of the Kingdom of God and from the subjective motive of universal love (252). The moral law affords no basis for any expectation, such as follows from the civil law, that obedience to the universal law will be rewarded with the protection and furtherance of our individual rights; on the contrary, the moral law forbids us to reckon thus on a reciprocal relation between duties and rights. Moral law, then, with Ritschl, denotes, not that original relation between God and His moral creatures, one and all, but that relation which subsists between members of the Kingdom of God, which, of course, is one of Christian love.

The significance of this distinction appears when Ritschl undertakes to show that the analogy of civil law is "inadequate" to express our relation to God because, under this analogy God is compelled

¹ The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation. (Eng. Trans.)

to punish infractions of His law. Applying moral law to the state of man in Eden, he held it "unintelligible" that God could be compelled by His justice to punish our first parents with eternal death on account of their disobedience on "a well-known occasion", and at the same time to consign the whole race for their ancestors' transgression to a state of punishment directly contrary to His plan. "The transgression of our first parents was anything but wicked" (256). The Covenant of Works and the terms and conditions it brought in, have, of course, no place in this view. Accordingly, sin is very easily pardoned:¹

"Sinners, upon whom educative penalties are laid, may without inconsistency be conceived as objects of pardon. But that the need for punishment is regarded as an obstacle in the way of pardon, and that in order to reconcile them the punishment of a substitute is accepted, is simply a consequence of the presupposed judicial character of the law. There is no immediate relation, however, between moral good and the moral act of pardon and legal punishment, whether it is borne by the guilty themselves or by their substitute.

This explains his view of our Lord. Jesus in respect of His birth was indistinguishable from other men and His worth lies in the manner in which He mastered His spiritual powers through a self-consciousness which transcended that of all other men. Whatever His work of reconciliation was, it called for powers no greater than other men had or might have. This is the foundation of Ritschl's doctrine of sin. It cannot be outlined here in all its intricate, metaphysical windings, its clever avoidances and its confident assertions. His conclusions are clear: The distinction between sin as ignorance and sin as final decision against recognized good is "thinkable" first of all as related to the conception of sin in general. Sin has no real end, either for the individual life or for the advancement of the whole. Ignorance also is not the sufficient ground for the confirming of the will in sin; for the will and knowledge are not wholly commensurate with one another. Therefore, neither (absolutely) nor yet in accordance with the conditions of experience is it to be denied that there may be a sinless development of life. The divine redemption or reconciliation is possible on the presupposition that there also exists a degree of sin which can only expect to be expelled from the world order. All these instances of sin are to be comprehended under the negative category of sin as ignorance. Even sins which present themselves to us "as a thoroughly confirmed habit of hardening" are to be put in this category. The conclusion is that God looks upon the sin of such men as ignorance, so that they are not past redemption.

The climax is all reached in his statement:²

The love of God can be conceived in relation only to such sinners as have not fallen into that degree of sin which excludes conversion of the will. It is just this negative relation that is expressed by the predication of ignorance—and nothing more. The presupposition of such a degree of sin in the case of others has just this much practical significance for us, that we ought to esteem them as capable of conversion. * * * The

¹ Ibid 268

² Ibid 383

thought, therefore, is that the love of God to sinners, as the motive of His purpose of redemption, and as the ultimate efficient ground of their conversion, cannot be extended to those persons in whom the purpose of opposition to the divine order of good has come to full consciousness and determination. Whether there are such men, and who they are, are questions that lie equally beyond our practical judgment and our theoretical knowledge.

These conclusions are in close harmony with the trend of Ritschl's teachings. They anticipate questions which are yet to come before us, but they illustrate the weight we must attach to his definition of moral law. The view of Ritschl empties sin of its danger by including under sins of ignorance even "a thoroughly confirmed habit of hardenings", and teaching that all such sins are within the work of reconciliation.

At the other extreme, he teaches that God's love cannot reach sinners whose sin excludes conversion of the will, which, of course, puts sinners like Saul of Tarsus and many of us today beyond the pale. Finally, Ritschl's view cuts the nerve of the evangelical appeal by raising the question whether, after all, there are such men and by concluding that we cannot tell.

The self-complacent, ease-loving spirit will ask nothing better than this theology, for it hides from view the law of God. The heart burdened with sin which it knows cannot be excused as ignorance will turn away from this theology in despair just because it hides from view the grace of God.

NOTE VI.—SOME RECENT VALUATIONS OF THE LAW OF GOD.

The valuation of the law of God presented in the text and shared by the writers enumerated in the preceding note and accepted by great bodies of Christians, is rejected by some men of devout scholarship and of wide influence in the religious thought of our day. This appears in their conclusions as to the need of grace, the work of grace for us and the work of grace in us. In them, as in all of us, the view of the law is regulative. To know their attitude towards it will enable anyone to forecast their conclusions on these vital themes.

Some of these valuations have been so long and so prominently before the Christian world that they need not be given again here, while others are so closely related to those noted that they may be passed over.

The names of Schleiermacher¹ and Ritschl,² for instance, occur to the mind as holding views of the law of God sharply at variance with those presented in the text. These profound scholars are well worthy of careful study but their general attitude has been presented so fully in these lectures already that further account seems needless. Dr. A. M. Fairbairn's³ doctrine of the Person of our Lord, enables us

¹ The Christian Faith cf. The Theology of Schleiermacher by Dr. George Cross

² Justification and Reconciliation cf. The Ritschlian Theology by Dr. A. E. Garvie

³ The Place of Christ in Modern Theology.

to gather sufficiently his view of salvation and thus of the law of God.

Sabatier¹ soon dismisses himself from consideration. He rules out guilt, merit, satisfaction, sacrifice, expiation as coming from creeds "anterior to Christianity."

Dr. Dale,² is not ashamed to deal with "austere" truths. In one memorable paragraph he sweeps away the popular theories that punishment is merely for discipline, for the public good or for the relief of offended dignity. "That the suffering inflicted is deserved is a necessary element in the conception of suffering" (443). "The sufferings which punish sin in this world, and the sufferings which will punish it in the next, are the expressions of the irreconcilable antagonism of God to sin, and to those who persist in sinning". (450).

The distinctive feature of Dr. Dale's position is that "If in any case the penalties of sin are remitted, some other Divine act of at least equal intensity, and in which the ill-desert of sin is expressed with at least equal energy, must take its place. The heart of the whole problem lies here. (451). Dr. Dale's point of difference with the view set forth in the text deals not with the law or the penalty of the law but with the mode by which the law can be satisfied in the salvation of sinful men. However we may differ with him on this point, his reverence for and his submission to the law of God assure that his memory shall ever be held in high regard by all who follow the guidance of Holy Scripture.

Dr. Horace Bushnell³, has been quoted in the text to show that like Dr. John Young, he holds that law and obligation do not begin with God's will and are not created by His will. There was "law before government". Accordingly, he holds that "there is no express sanction to vindicate the law absolute, and no definitely understood sanction". "Instituted government is for the sake of redemption". God's righteousness is "by obedience to a law before God's will." His justice is "by the retributive vindication of a law that is under and by God's will itself." "God must be righteous, He will be just". The justice of God is grounded in the wants of His government". Applying these principles, he holds⁴ that:

There is, then, no such thing in God, or any other being, as a kind of justice which goes by the law of desert, and ceases to be justice when ill-desert is not exactly matched by suffering. * * * There is no principle which any human being can state, or even think, that obliges Him, on pain of losing character, to do by the disobedient exactly as they deserve * * * Perfect liberty is left Him to do by the wrong-doer better than he deserves, and yet without any fault of justice.

It may suffice to add that, however influential it was for many years, the stern experience of the civilized world during the recent war, will lead men to see that in the law of God there must be something more authoritative than Dr. Bushnell and his followers found.

¹ The Doctrine of the Atonement, Dr. Auguste Sabatier, Paris. 111 ff.

² The Atonement

³ Vicarious Sacrifice 254 ff.

⁴ Ibid 270.

Dr. John McLeod Campbell¹ takes a high view of the law as such:

I believe that no modification of the law as law, in accommodation to man's condition as a sinner, is conceivable that could either give the assurance of the pardon of sin, or quicken us with a new life; and that all idea of bridging over, by a modified law, the gulf which we have been contemplating is untenable.

He adds that, if this is to be done, it must be by some moral or spiritual constitution quite other than the law and that this must honor the law and this requirement he finds met in the atonement.

Another instance is Canon Moberly². He holds it "to be at the very root of the Christian doctrine that He, who made atonement between God and Man, Himself, in the fullest sense, was God and was Man". (p. 81). Yet he deals with the problems before him with no reference to the law. His index has no place even for the word. "The language of human jurisprudence is confusing. Accordingly, his first chapter is on punishment, his second on penitence, his third on forgiveness; and these three he regards as "primary terms". (p. 1). But are these terms really primary? Is not rather the law out of which punishment proceeds, in compliance with which forgiveness has its value, and from which penitence derives its meaning, the real primary element?

A later instance is Dr. Denney's³ posthumous volume, containing his Cunningham Lectures. It is to be read in the light of his "Studies in Theology", "The Death of Christ", "Atonement and the Modern Mind". His statements on many points strongly confirm certain aspects of the historic faith, as for instance, his insistence on "an objective atonement".

Dr. Denney's volume opens with a chapter on reconciliation as an experience in which there are decided traces of Ritschl. Only when it is half done does he take up "The Need of Reconciliation". His conception of the law is not easy to find. It is embodied in two passages which occur in long paragraphs and in a form not likely to attract attention.

The law Paul deals with is "law in the large sense of the ethical necessities which determine all the relations of God and man. * * * The divine righteousness * * * is not revealed outside of, but within, and always in harmony with, the constitution of a moral world in which God and man live a common life" (167-8). "The law of God is not a statute; it is an ideal which defines itself through conscience in a form appropriate to each successive moment of our existence; and the obligation of it, as so defined, is never less than unconditional; We ought not to do any wrong for the world" (223).

It is in Dr. Denney's interpretation of punishment (208) that his valuation of God's law appears. We cannot compare "the positive

¹ The Nature of the Atonement and Its Relation to The Remission of Sins and Eternal Life, 25.

² Atonement and Personality.

³ The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation.

punishments" instituted and inflicted by human society with the inevitable reactions of the divine order against evil:

The latter are not positive; they are in a strict sense reactions. They are the sin itself coming back in another form and finding out the sinner. They are nothing if not retributive. That does not prevent them from being disciplinary or reformatory; on the contrary, their whole power to correct or to educate depends on the fact that they are retributive.

This is enlarged upon and "the hopeful penalty" is that in which the sin finds out the sinner and makes him see all that it means. Penologists agree that what "really prevents crime is not the severity of punishment but the certainty of detection". Under the divine rule, the reaction is inevitable: man can be sure his sin will find him out; retribution is as certain as wrong. "The reaction against evil is persistent, inexorable, absolute; when it goes on to the end, this is the end". (209). Dr. Denney's favorite term 'reaction' thrusts itself at once upon our attention. His use of it is almost incessant. Just how much he would put into it is not clear. We speak sometimes of a reaction of opinion but it is loose speaking, not in place in formal speech upon the profound themes of life. The word has its place in the physical, not the moral order. It applies to processes which are chemical, physiological or psycho-physical. To carry it over into the moral order is to ignore the fundamental difference between the moral and the physical, to impart an automatic aspect to a process which is essentially personal, deliberative and judicial.

Further, Dr. Denney blurs the contrast between the retributive and the disciplinary and educative views as to the ends of punishment. If God punishes to discipline and educate, it is one thing; only if He punishes because sin deserves it is His moral order maintained. This comes out in his account of the agony and the passion of our Lord which were penal "in the sense that, in that dark hour, He had to realize to the full the divine reaction against sin in the race in which He was incorporated and that, without doing so to the uttermost, He could not have been the Redeemer of that race from sin or the Reconciler of sinful men to God". His sufferings came on Him because "the world had sinned, and, in becoming part of the world, He stood committed to experience as its Saviour everything in which the divine reaction against sin is brought home to the soul" (273).

Dr. Denney quite freely pronounces "unreal" statements to which he objects. The awakened conscience of a sinful man could hardly find a milder term to apply to Dr. Denney's account of sin and atonement. If when Christ "bore our sins", He did no more than this, His work for us will bring no real relief. The avoidance of the "forensic", the non-penal valuation of God's law ends in statements hard to distinguish from those of Ritschl and Campbell.

Dr. Denney could feel no "pulse" in the Christianity of Canon Moberly. Does his own show any more? Not in his posthumous volume, but in his earlier writing. Fifteen years before he said:¹

¹ The Death of Christ, 286.

The words of the revival hymn, 'Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe,' have the root of the matter in them; and, however inadequate they may be to the interpretation of Christ's work and of Christian experience as a whole they are infinitely truer than the most balanced, considerate, or subtle statement which denies them. * * * There is such a thing as pride, the last form of which is unwillingness to become debtor even to Christ for forgiveness of sins; and it is conceivable that in any given case it may be this which makes the words of the hymn stick in our throats."

These valuations of the law of God are widely held in our day and they are defended both ably and persistently. The bearing of them on the estimate in which men view sin and salvation is plain and it will become plainer as the doctrine of salvation engages our attention.

NOTE VII.—LOVE AND GRACE

Drs. Thayer and Cremer in their Greek-English Lexicons of the New Testament have analyses of grace, to which the reader is referred.

The love of God revealed in Scripture and as distinguished from His grace is involved in current theological discussion more than is generally understood. This subject is not directly related to the present inquiry and so is passed by. Those who are interested will find it treated with great force and fulness by the late Prof. B. B. Warfield of Princeton Theological Seminary in an article on "The Terminology of Love" (P. T. R. XVI: 1, 3, 44: II, 202) and by Prof. Geerhardus Vos on "The Scriptural Doctrine of Love" (D. A. C. 713) and on "The Love of God" (P. T. R., I, II, 179).

NOTE VIII.—LEGAL FICTIONS

The use of this phrase in connection with the covenants is evidently without adequate knowledge of its meaning in jurisprudence.

Sir Henry Maine¹ says:

Legal fiction signifies any assumption, which conceals or affects to conceal, the fact that a rule of law has undergone alteration, its letter remaining unchanged, its operation being modified.*** The law has been wholly changed; the 'fiction' is that it remains what it always was *** Fictions in all their forms are particularly congenial to the infancy of society. They satisfy the desire for improvement, which is not quite wanting, at the same time that they do not offend the superstitious disrelish for change which is always present.

¹ Ancient Law 25.

In the covenants, there is nothing to "conceal" and much to publish; no rule of law "undergoes alteration", but, remaining the same, it is employed for a purpose beyond law; "the superstitious disrelish for change" is ignored, for both covenants involve a change from what mere law could do. The phrase, therefore, can only be employed in this connection to create prejudice.

Drs. Sanday and Headlam¹ at the close of their exposition of Romans 3:27, 31, say:

This, it may be objected, is but a 'fiction of mercy'. All mercy, all forgiveness, is of the nature of fiction. It consists in treating men better than they deserve.

NOTE IX.—RECENT CRITICISM OF THE FEDERAL THEOLOGY

Much of the recent criticism of the Federal Theology is merely the repetition of that which has been made familiar in the history of Christian Doctrine.

Dr. F. D. E. Schleiermacher, as interpreted by Dr. George Cross², taught that

Adam's nature was related to his own sin in the same way as our nature to our sin. The derivation of our sinfulness from the first individual act of sin committed by our first parents can never be an element of our redemption—faith, and a natural and unprejudiced exegesis of those passages of Scripture which are supposed to support that view will yield no such result. * * * Wherefore the inborn sinfulness must have existed in the race from the very commencement (sic). Apart from this there could be no universal capacity for redemption.

This may pass with those who are willing to view God in a sense the author of sin as Schleiermacher does, according to Dr. Cross. For others the effect will be to commend a view, which, with difficulties of its own, attributes only justice, truth and goodness to God and sin to man.

Dr. F. R. Tennant³ of Cambridge, in his elaborate work, can give room to no more than the following concerning the federal theology:

It is only by replacing Augustine's theory of imputation, a curious anticipation of the realism of which we hear so much in later mediaeval controversy, by suppositions equally fanciful, such as the federal theology which would see in Adam our valid representative, without our acquiescence, in an arbitrary judicial compact with the Deity, that the theory of original sin has been even nominally reconciled with the sense of original guilt, and saved from referring the responsibility for human sin mediately back to the Creator.

Besides the question as to how well Dr. Tennant understands the federal theology, there arises another on which there is some marked difference of opinion viz: How far does he understand "Augustine's

¹ International Critical Commentary Romans, 94.

² The Theology of Schleiermacher, 183-4.

³ The Concept of Sin.

theory of imputation " Both of these writers come into view when we consider the state of sin.

It is not within the scope of these lectures to review the criticism which proceeds from want of sympathy with the evangelical faith. There are, however, three representative evangelical theologians of our day held in deservedly high esteem because of their contributions to Christian thought, who, maintaining the reality of our relation to Adam and then to Christ, do not accept the Federal Theology. While they seem to occupy ground in common, each of them expresses himself in his own forcible way and, from these expressions, one may gather the full weight of the objections they entertain and estimate their value for ourselves.

In the order of time, the first of the three is Dr. R. W. Dale¹ of Birmingham, known everywhere as thoroughly representative of the best in British Congregationalism. Through more than five hundred pages, Dr. Dale nobly maintains the demands of God's law and the value of Christ's death as vicarious, representative, sacrificial and propitiatory. He seems at times to be about to recognize in his Lord, the federal head and representative of believers, yet he always veers away. He says of our Lord Jesus Christ:

"He has 'died the Just for the unjust' and has been 'made a curse for us'. This supreme act becomes ours—not by formal imputation—but through a law which constitutes His life the original spring of our own. * * * He was not our Representative in a sense which would imply that because He submitted to the just authority by which the penalties of sin are inflicted we are released from the obligations of submission. * * * The technical language of theologians obscured and even concealed the truth which it was intended to express. The Lord Jesus Christ is in very truth, by the original law of the universe, the Representative of mankind.

The second is Dr. A. H. Strong² of Rochester, who is of authority not only in Baptist circles but in other churches also in that his volumes are used in their theological seminaries. He says of the federal headship of Adam:

"We not only never authorized Adam to make such a covenant, but there is no evidence that he ever made one at all. It is not even certain that Adam knew he should have posterity. In the case of the imputation of our sins to Christ, Christ covenanted voluntarily to bear them, and joined Himself to our nature that He might bear them. * * * Only on this supposition of Natural Headship could God justly constitute Adam our representative, or hold us responsible for the depraved nature we have received from him.

The third is Dr. James Orr³ of the United Free Church College in Glasgow, who represents the best scholarship of the Presbyterianism of Scotland, and whose various writings are of value to Christendom as a whole. He admits that in the federal theology "there is a Scriptural idea at the heart of the conception" and that it both introduced

¹The Atonement, 480, 489, 491.

²Systematic Theology, II 615 623

³The Progress of Dogma, 303.

the idea of historical progress and afforded to the divine purpose a dynamic character rather than the static conception of the eternal decree, but he rejects it as a sufficient explanation and says:

"It failed to seize the true idea of development * * * Its most obvious defect was that, in using the idea of the covenant as an exhaustive category, and attempting to force into it the whole material of theology, it created an artificial scheme which could only repel minds desirous of simple and natural notions.

Coming to the "dark and difficult problem of hereditary or racial guilt", Dr. Orr says:

From what has been said in elucidation of guilt, it would seem as if the very nature of guilt lay in its being individual. I cannot be guilty of another's sin. On the other side, the fact has to be faced that, because of the organic connection—the solidarity—of the race, the penalties of transgression rarely are confined to the individual transgressor, but overflow on all connected with him. They descend from generation to generation, even to the extent of the inheritance of a polluted nature, and, on the above showing, of universal subjection to death.

Dr. Orr's explanation is that the innocent do suffer the painful consequences which are the penalties of another's transgression; that there are "public and corporate responsibilities in which all concerned must take their share, though the acts by which they are affected are not their own"; and that in the matter of guilt "certainty of spirit knits the generations together in one guilty whole".

These quotations are enough to show the positions of these three representative theologians. They deserve full consideration, yet none of the three theologians would expect them to be adopted merely on their authority. The question is, do these positions afford a sufficient explanation of the facts of sin and salvation? In answer it can only be repeated that no representative federal theologian presents the conception as free from difficulty. No view man can reach of the deep mysteries of sin and salvation is free from difficulty. Of the best of them, we are forced to say, Now we see through a glass darkly. But an explanation may be sufficient, even if it is not complete, and it is this which is claimed for the federal theology. The only rational course is not to magnify difficulties which all recognize but to provide, if possible, an explanation more nearly adequate. It is this which, so far, has not, in the judgment of federal theologians, been done.

In studying the views of these eminent theologians it ought to be noticed that none of the three makes an adequate statement of the federal relationship as it is understood by its advocates. If it were clearly before them, their writings do not indicate it, especially in the interpretation of the religious conceptions now so widely prevalent which are cited in the text. This is the more remarkable in Dr. Orr, as, in his church, the Westminster Standards, which set forth the Federal Theology, are of authority.

It is to be noted further that, while these three theologians hold strongly to a real relation between Adam and all mankind, they seek to explain it as natural or organic, and not legal or forensic. Dr. Orr deals with minds "desirous of simple and natural notions", as if the desires of men under Moral Law could exempt them from legal or forensic relations. The natural and organic is indeed the basis of the federal, but, without the federal, it affords no ground for the transmission or conveyance of either sin or salvation. If either Adam or our Lord Jesus was in any sense our representative, it was because he was so constituted or appointed. Further, if either was appointed, it had to do with the question of guilt, which is a question of our standing before the law, and cannot be taken out of court into the sphere of the natural or the organic. It does not alter the case that our age is thinking, as we are told, in terms of biology. Whether we will or not, we are under moral law and whatever is done for us must be within the sphere of law, must satisfy legal requirements, however unpleasant or hard they may seem. Men that break the laws of society have a natural aversion to the processes and the findings of criminal law, but we do not for that reason relieve them of the penalties of their offences. So of those who break the law of God.

To one familiar with the federal theology, it is a matter of surprise that thinkers such as these three should have stopped short of that federal relation which would have brought their conclusions to completeness and afforded ground for faith that was safe beyond assault. If the federal theology is at a loss for want of the support of men like these, it is not too much to say that their theology in turn betrays its lack of that which the federal theology would supply. The objection stated by Dr. Strong is dealt with in the text. It is not claimed that the covenants of works and grace were covenants in the same sense as human covenants or contracts. If a better word for the relation could be found, it would be accepted without delay.

Once more, it is to be noted that these views which are supposed to escape the difficulties of the federal theology lay the evangelical faith open to dangers far more serious. What are we to think of the statement of Dr. Dale that "the Lord Jesus Christ is, in very truth, by the original law of the universe, the representative of mankind"? Apart from the question how He could be our representative except in a federal sense, this question prompts others at once: Is Jesus Christ a representative by the original law of the universe, or by that grace which brought relief from sin? Is Jesus Christ the representative of all mankind and, if so, in what sense? These are questions which go to the center of the evangelical faith and on which evangelical believers ought not to be divided. The federal theology has but one answer to each of these questions and it rings true to the evangelical faith; its critics who are evangelical must needs make sure of an answer equally true.

In conclusion, recent criticism has not impaired the federal theology while religious conceptions now widely current seem to be pointing the way to a new acceptance of it, with corresponding benefit to the practical Christian life.

In the Oxford Conference on sacrifice and priesthood, Canon Scott Holland¹ of St. Paul's, noted the general agreement of the participants in the acceptance of Christ's sacrifice as "absolute and real" and, in reply to some remarks as to the moral significance of that sacrifice, said:

In relation to these moral meanings, I would venture to doubt whether the terms (1) bargain or (2) mediation, ought to be excluded as Archdeacon Wilson appeared to require. Surely (as Canon Moberly has suggested) the word 'bargain' is only the lowest term of that which, under moral transfiguration, takes the shape of a covenant, a bond, a transaction between two parties which places them under moral and spiritual obligations to one another. The conception of covenant—of a covenanting act—lies deep in sacrifice, and in the Jewish and Christian conception of man's relation to God. This might have its germinal expression under the grosser form of a 'bargain' (such as Jacob made on waking from his dream); but our interest lies, not in excluding the term, but in watching the gradual historical process by which it becomes spiritualized and refined.

NOTE X.—THE HINDU ATTITUDE TOWARD SIN.

Dr. S. H. Kellogg² shows that, according to this faith, sin cannot accurately be said to exist, in that there is no personal God whose law is violated:

According to the universal Hindu belief, shared alike by the most ignorant villagers and by the most learned pundits, all that I am and all that I do, be it what we call good or be it evil, is the necessary and inevitable result of certain other acts of mine in a previous state of being, of which I have no recollection, but the fruit of which I nevertheless must bring forth, of whatsoever sort it be.*** Every act, be it good or bad, makes it necessary that I be again born that I may reap its fruit, and that personal existence in some form should be continued; for it is this, and not what we call sin, that is really the fundamental evil.

Notwithstanding this belief and the constant preaching of it, the sacred books of the Hindu have much to say of sin. Dr. Kellogg quotes the Sanscrit couplet:

I am sin, my work is sin, my spirit is sin, in sin was I conceived,
Save me, O Lotus-eyed love, Remover of all my sin!

He quoted from the modern Hindu reformers like expressions:
With what face can I approach thee? Shame cometh unto me!
Thou knowest the evil I have done. How can I be pleasing unto Thee?

I went out to seek a bad man; bad man found I none at all;
If I look unto my own heart, myself is the worst of all.

Rev. Alison R. Bryan, formerly of Sangli, India, shows the effect

¹ Priesthood and Sacrifice: A Report on a Conference, 84

² Handbook of Comparative Religion 48 ff.

of Hindu pantheism in the absence of the idea of sin. He traces this to the lack of a moral standard, the law of God, and says:

There is one phase of this question of sin, which has come to me with great force. You in America, with the background of Christian training influencing the thought of the people, even where they neglect Christ's principles, may overlook the most significant reason for the attitude towards sin. The Hindu religion has little, if any, basis in morality, certainly little in practice, whether much in theory or not. The worship of the gods, of which there are 330,000,000—more than there are people,—consists in an early washing in one of the sacred rivers, if possible, the application to the forehead of the mark of the various gods, which they choose to worship. * * * On the return from the river, a little of the sacred water is carried in a brass vessel to the household shrine, of which even the poorest seem possessed. There, or at the temple, the water is poured out, when, Ganpati, the elephant-headed state-protector of Sangli, is worshipped or Maruti, or Shiva, or Krishna, whose most sacred River flows right by Sangli. Blossoms, flowers, a little rice, some sweetmeats, are always acceptable to the gods. When you have bowed to the ground a few times, no matter what your thoughts throughout the ritual, you have proved yourself a good Hindu.

Your moral life, your belief in the efficacy or reality of all this form, has nothing to do with your standing as a good and regular member of Hindu religious society. How can such open encouragement of sham, result in the quickening of conscience and the awakening to sin? . . . You see the difficulty; the need for a standard and then the need for the sense of falling short and transgressing this standard of law.

The moral indifference shows, somehow, on the faces of the best of the Hindus. The Brahmins have a haughty, indifferent expression that puts them above all ordinary standards and makes help or sympathy in the case of a poor outcast absolutely beneath them.

NOTE XI.—THE WORD "EVANGELICAL".

The word "evangelical" is often used loosely to indicate the opposite of ritualistic or rationalistic without any definite content. The nearest approach to an official definition in modern times is in the Basis of the Evangelical Alliance, adopted by the American Branch, which, in affirming its "faith in all the doctrines of the inspired word of God, and in the consensus of doctrines held by all true Christians from the beginning," and disclaiming any purpose to establish a creed, but seeking rather to give "an indication of the class of persons whom it is desirable to embrace within the Alliance", enumerate these doctrines in conformity with the consensus adopted when the Alliance was first formed in 1846, in London, which was afterwards approved by the separate European organizations, as follows:

1. The divine inspiration, authority and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures.

2. The right and duty of private judgment in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures.

3. The Unity of the God-head and the Trinity of the persons therein.

4. The utter depravity of human nature in consequence of the fall.

5. The incarnation of the Son of God, His work of atonement for all mankind and His mediatorial intercession and reign.

6. The justification of the sinner by faith alone.

7. The work of the Holy Spirit in the conversion and sanctification of the sinner.

8. The immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, the judgment of the world by our Lord, Jesus Christ, with the eternal blessedness of the righteous and the eternal punishment of the wicked.

9. The divine institution of the Christian ministry, and the obligation and perpetuity of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

The Evangelical Alliance is no longer active. At the present time, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America represents the effort "to express the fellowship and catholic unity of the Christian Church" and to bring the Christian bodies of America into united service for Christ and the world. Many evangelical churches are represented in this Council but as it is not limited to these, it affords us no aid in determining the meaning of the word. The nearest approach to a definite statement is the following, from the constitution of the Council:

In the Providence of God, the time has come more fully to manifest the essential oneness of the Christian churches of America in Jesus Christ as their Divine Lord and Saviour, and to promote the spirit of fellowship, service and co-operation among them.

—From the Preamble and Plan.

The Sacerdotal Churches hold to the Deity of Our Lord quite as firmly as the Evangelical and the Federal Council is intended to include them also as far as possible.

Dr. A. H. Strong¹ says:

Protestantism is the protest of mankind against the substitution of the Church in the place of Christ, and of the priest in the place of Scripture. Roman Catholicism had turned means into ends. * * * The Protestant Reformation, on the other hand, dispossessed all these intermediaries between the soul and God. It insisted that every man must have personal dealings with Christ. He is not to come to Christ through the Church, but to come to the Church through Christ. He is not to take his belief from the priest, but from the Word of God. He is bound to read and to interpret the Scripture for himself, and he is personally responsible to God for the conclusions to which he comes. Church of England", says:

The term, however, has lost its freshness of meaning. Rev. W. N. Hudson² writing on "The position of an Evangelical in the

¹ The Great Poets and Their Theology, 273.

² The Churchman XXIX. 118, 769.

"This we might mention is a great characteristic of Evangelicalism—the belief in corporate prayer. Could anything be more Scriptural than the meeting together of fellow Christians to pray for one another and offer up heartfelt petitions to the Almighty? And yet, even among so-called Evangelicals, at the present day, a man is rather made fun of if he is known to frequent prayer-meetings."

Dr. B. B. Warfield,¹ however, writing of religion in our day, said:

The religious terrain is full of the graves of good words which have died for lack of care—they stand as close in it as do the graves today in the flats of Flanders or among the hills of northern France. And these good words are still dying all around us. There is that good word "Evangelical". It is certainly moribund if not already dead. Nobody any longer seems to know what it means. Even our dictionaries no longer know . . . Does anybody in the world know what "Evangelical" means in our current religious speech?

¹ "Redeemer" and "Redemption" P. T. R. XIV 2, 198.

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